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ABSTRACT

This publication is one of a series of reports on activities supported by the Ford Foundation. It deals with the foundation's assistance to Puerto Ricans living on the island and on mainland United States. The report opens with descriptions of the social and economic disadvantagement of Puerto Ricans, then specifies efforts made to expand educational opportunities (both on the island and mainland), preserve Puerto Rican history and culture, attack poverty, and protect the legal rights of mainland Puerto Ricans. The report also includes details of several programs aimed more generally at helping minority groups including Puerto Ricans. The report details the particular funds spent, and achievements in all the above areas. (NG)

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Ford Foundation Assistance to Puerto Ricans

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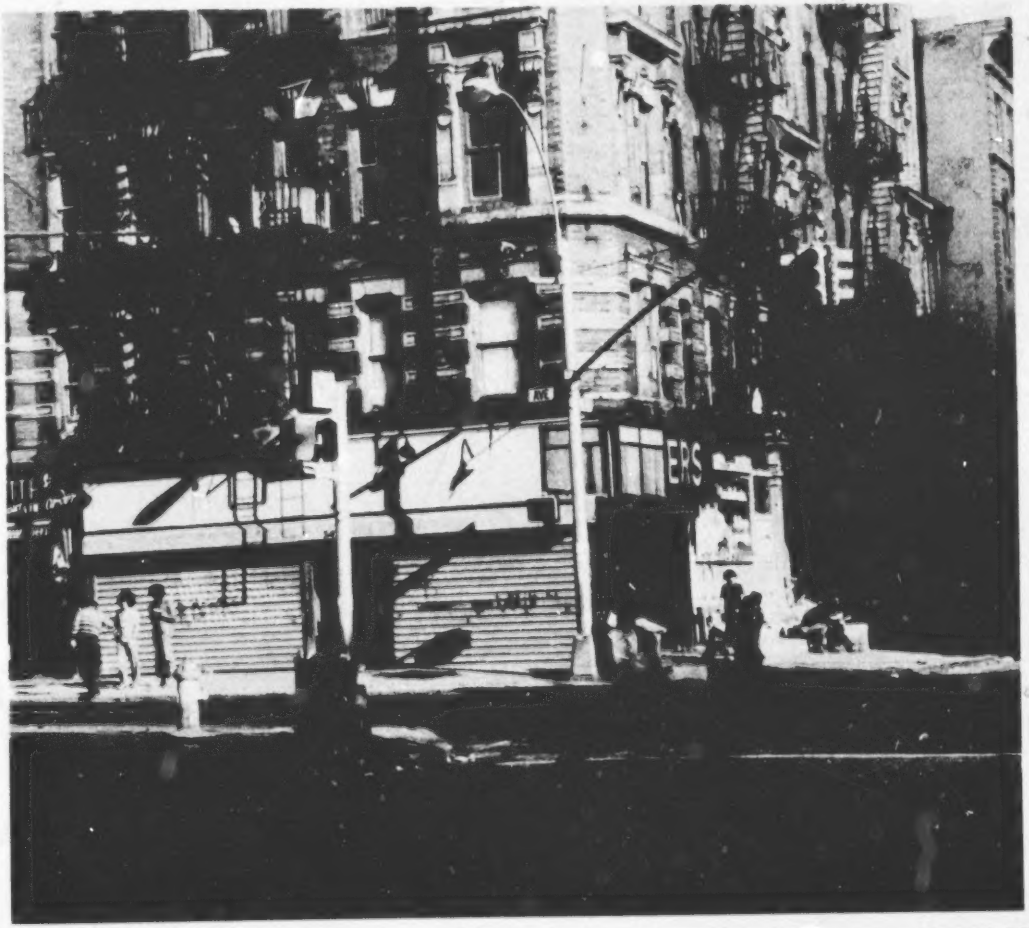
The inner-city barrio, with its substandard housing and limited employment opportunities, is often the only place where Puerto Ricans recently moved to the mainland can afford to live.



Puerto Ricans living on the United States mainland, estimated to be between 1.5 and 2.5 million, are among the country's most severely deprived urban groups. In New York City, where the vast majority of mainland Puerto Ricans live and work, 35 per cent were below the poverty line in 1970, as compared with 8.9 per cent of non-Puerto Rican whites and 24 per cent of blacks. The latest available statistics from the 1970 census show that there were three times as many unemployed Puerto Ricans as whites, and twice as many as blacks. In education Puerto Ricans show poor records of academic achievement, high numbers of school dropouts, and few high school and college graduates. They have among the highest rates of suicide, drug addiction, and major diseases. There are few Puerto Rican doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other professionals, and few elected officials.*

When poor Puerto Rican families leave the island they usually settle in run-down densely populated urban areas, the only neighborhoods where they can afford to live. In these barrios they suffer from the usual effects of poverty—poor housing, underemployment, drugs, and crime. In addition, a language barrier separates them from the majority community. Outside the barrio, they find little knowledge or acceptance of their Puerto Rican heritage and culture, and in the schools the limited educational materials on Puerto Rico are, according to experts, poorly researched and written and frequently distorted in content.

The continual movement back and forth between the island and the mainland (during some years more people return to Puerto Rico than leave) also complicates the picture. This travel is encouraged by such factors as relatively cheap air fare, changing employment opportunities, and the Commonwealth status of Puerto Rico, which permits free movement between island and mainland.

These problems form the background of the Ford Foundation's assistance to Puerto Ricans. Programs aimed at alleviating social or economic difficulties facing mainland Puerto Ricans and easing their transition between two cultures are part of an overall Foundation concern to advance opportunities for disadvantaged minorities. Since 1963 grants totaling some $9 million have been made to organizations and individuals, both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland, to help solve some of the educational, cultural, legal, and economic problems faced by Puerto Rican people. Following is a summary of the Foundation's activities in this area.†

*These statistics are examined in a Ford Foundation-supported study, "Some Demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Puerto Rican Population Living on the Mainland, U.S.A.," by A. J. Jaffe and Zaida Carreras Carleton, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1974. Their research was the basis for a chapter in *Minorities in the United States*, by Sar A. Levitan, William B. Johnston, and Robert Taggart. Washington, D.C., Public Affairs Press, 1975.

†Appendix (page 22) lists all grants and projects (with amounts and dates of approval) for Puerto Rican organizations.

Expanding Educational Opportunities

Poor performance in elementary and secondary schools and the disproportionately low college attendance by Puerto Rican youth tend to perpetuate a below-average standard of living and decrease the chances for challenging and financially rewarding employment.* To help break this cycle the Foundation has supported several projects aimed at improving schooling for Puerto Rican children on the island and mainland, encouraging them to continue their education beyond high school, and providing special opportunities and services for Puerto Rican college and university students.

Island Schools. Mass education has been a goal of Puerto Rico since the turn of the century, but the obstacles have been many and difficult to overcome. At the end of Spanish rule in 1898, for example, there was no organized school system, and few individuals were qualified to teach. During the next sixty years, in the effort to enroll as many students as possible, as quickly as possible, some sacrifices had to be made, and usually the quality of instruction suffered most. As recently as 1955 teachers seldom had more than two years of college, and often taught two separate classes. In order to handle large numbers of students, they were forced to rely totally on textbooks and prepared lesson plans, which meant the curriculum became standardized, routine, and dull, with little flexibility for responding to the needs of individual students.

To help make the curriculum more interesting and effective and better prepare island teachers, the Foundation during the 1960s supported several programs sponsored by the Puerto Rican Department of Education and island universities. The grants were part of the Foundation's $30 million Comprehensive School Improvement Program (CSIP), a ten-year effort aimed at legitimizing the concept of innovation in public schools and testing various new ideas and methods.†

One such program, sponsored by the University of Puerto Rico and the Department of Education, sought to reorganize the secondary school curriculum and teaching methods and at the same time develop new ways to recruit and train teachers. Spanning the years 1963-68, the program developed an experimental curriculum and introduced new instructional practices including supervised library work, more individual instruction, and increased use of audiovisual aids. Teaching loads were reduced, and teachers were encouraged to participate in seminars and in-service education activities.

To help attract talented students to the teaching profession and to improve their training, the program also sponsored several experiments at the University of Puerto Rico College of Education. Student interns, for example, spent half of their junior year teaching the new curriculum in the schools under the guidance of master teachers.

*In 1970, only 20 per cent of New York's Puerto Rican population over age twenty-five had graduated from high school (as compared with 51 per cent for non-Puerto Rican whites and 41 per cent for blacks), and only one Puerto Rican in one hundred held a college degree (against 13 per cent for whites and 4 per cent for blacks).

†For an evaluation of the Comprehensive School Improvement Program, see "A Foundation Goes to School," available from the Ford Foundation, Office of Reports, 320 East 43 Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. It should be noted that the Puerto Rican projects were not described in the report since they were not finished and evaluated at the time of publication.

The program was not without its difficulties—there was some public opposition to the curricular changes and reluctance by older teachers to accept the new teaching methods. But later evaluations showed an increase in student achievement and confidence, particularly among children of the poor. The project was for a few years incorporated into an islandwide plan funded from Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

In 1965 the Foundation granted funds to set up curriculum centers in Puerto Rico. They were designed to improve course offerings, develop new teaching materials, and provide in-service training for teachers. The island's Department of Education received $750,000 for five centers that concentrated on secondary school problems, and the Catholic University of Puerto Rico was granted $78,000 for in-service training centers for science, mathematics, and social studies teachers in grades four through six. The centers still exist today, although budget cutbacks and changes in the government administratio have modified and reduced their operation Most curriculum development has again been centralized, and teachers who once were given released time for training at centers must now go in their spare time.

The Foundation joined with the government in funding another project in 1967. Drawing upon earlier CSIP innovations in the Puerto Rican school system, the Department of Education designed three model teacher-training centers to demonstrate the new methods and also to share new educational ideas and material. The Foundation granted $20,000 to the department to help plan the $3.5 million project, which was funded under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Administrators. Among the factors contributing to Puerto Rican children's poor educational achievement in the New York City school system has been the low representation of the Puerto Rican community at the supervisory and administrative level. Though nearly 25 per cent of the school population in 1967 was Puerto Rican, there were no Puerto Rican principals, supervisors, or high-level administrators. Nor were there many Puerto Rican candidates for such jobs.

To prepare Puerto Rican teachers and assistants-to-principals for advanced administrative posts, the Foundation in 1968 supported the Instructional Administrators Program (IAP) at Fordham University through a grant to the State University of New York. Open to both blacks and Puerto Ricans, the one-year graduate program combined a special curriculum in urban school administration with internships that offered practical experience in administration and supervision. At the end of the program each graduate received the New York State School Administrator and Supervisor certificate, and many also satisfied the requirements for the New York State School District Administrator certificate.

During the three years it existed, the program enrolled a total of sixty students, chosen from among thousands of applicants. The selection criteria were academic excellence through the master's degree level, several years of work experience in an urban school, and demonstrated leadership in community affairs.

The IAP program helped to open many

doors for its graduates: Four, for example, have been elected community superintendents in the New York City system. Marco Hernandez became the first Puerto Rican high school principal in New York City, and several other Puerto Rican IAP graduates now head elementary or junior high schools. Other graduates of the program hold administrative and faculty positions at colleges and universities.

Despite the relatively small number of students enrolled in the IAP, the success of the program's graduates has given encouragement to other minority teachers and lower-level administrators who want to advance in the school system's administrative hierarchy.

Bilingual Education. A decade ago United States government officials began to recognize the difficulties Puerto Rican and Mexican American children encounter in classrooms designed to serve English-speaking whites. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 established special bilingual programs ranging from the preparation of new curricula to the training of teachers for bilingual classrooms. And several recent court decisions have reaffirmed the legal rights of Spanish-speaking children to bilingual education. School districts must now assume management and many of the costs of bilingual education as a regular part of school programs, but often they lack the required resources and expertise. There is a severe shortage of trained bilingual personnel, few specially geared teaching materials, and little school-community consensus on the subject.

To help ease the transition to bilingual education, the Foundation recently allocated $150,000 to provide technical assistance to the Puerto Rican communities of New York and several other cities. Funds are largely committed to provide professional services, monitor school district implementation, inform lawyers concerning the educational as well as the legal aspects of the question, and examine public policy affecting the development of bilingual education as a sound alternative for American education.

The need for bilingual and bicultural counseling is a crucial aspect of bilingual education but has received little attention.

Of approximately 750 counselors in the New York City school system in 1972, for example, only fifteen to twenty were Puerto Rican. A similar situation existed within the city's social agencies, parochial schools, and colleges. Educators have long recognized the importance of counseling by persons familiar with the language and culture of students. The shortage of bilingual and bicultural counselors was true, too, of Puerto Rico, where few understood the mores and customs, or variants of spoken English, of Puerto Ricans who had grown up in the United States but who had returned to the island.

In 1972 the Foundation provided partial support for a pilot work-study project sponsored by a consortium of universities in New York and Puerto Rico to help alleviate this acute shortage.*

The first group of forty men and women, ranging in age from twenty to fifty-four, was recruited and enrolled at the consortium universities in the summer of 1972. During the fourteen-month course, they spent three days a week studying such subjects as career

*City University of New York, University of Puerto Rico (Rio Piedras), Catholic University of Puerto Rico, and the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico.

education, schools and community, and group and individual counseling. The other two days were devoted to internships with schools, colleges, and agencies. By September 1973 thirty-nine had earned master's degrees in counseling and had been awarded certification in guidance by the New York State Education Department, which has reciprocal agreements with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The pilot project had succeeded in offering the kind of training and experience needed to equip bilingual-bicultural counselors, but the few trained could not begin to serve the needs of 250,000 Spanish-speaking students in New York City and some 31,000 students in Puerto Rico whose primary language was English. The consortium decided to continue the program so that an additional eighty-nine counselors would be trained by the spring of 1975, and the Ford Foundation provided additional support.

The consortium recently encountered serious financial difficulties when several anticipated funding sources other than the Ford Foundation failed to participate. It was forced to dissolve, but all eighty-nine students completed their training on schedule in the spring of 1975.

Los Aspirantes. In 1961 a small group of New York City Puerto Rican professionals recognized the need to further develop leadership among their people. They reasoned that the need was most critical among the young (who comprised more than half of the total Puerto Rican population on the mainland) and decided to focus their efforts on lowering the dropout rate and encouraging young Puerto Ricans to attend college.

To advance these objectives, the professionals created Aspira of America, originally under the auspices of the Puerto Rican Forum.* For the past eighteen years Aspira has offered students a network of services designed to foster self-confidence, the desire for a college education, and a commitment to the Puerto Rican community. The success of its programs in New York City aroused keen interest in other cities with substantial Puerto Rican populations, and in 1968 the Foundation granted $650,000 to open Aspira offices in Chicago, Newark, and Philadelphia; in 1969 a $100,000 supplement helped to start an Aspira program in Puerto Rico.

At the core of the Aspira process are the counseling and leadership development programs. Educational counselors (in all cases Puerto Rican college graduates) help more than 7,500 high school "Aspirantes" each year to develop career goals and to select high school courses leading to these goals. Every student also is given scholarship and loan advice. Last year some 1,500 young Puerto Ricans received nearly full college scholarships from Aspira. The organization also offers annual college interview meetings; in 1974 recruiters from 187 colleges met with more than 5,000 potential students.

Aspira Clubs, which numbered ninety by 1974, are based in high schools or community organizations. They give members the chance to design and carry out programs that help them acquire new skills and develop leadership potential. Illinois' Tilden High School Club, for example, planned a Latin art show,

*The Puerto Rican Forum was organized in 1957 in New York City to strengthen the economic and social position of Puerto Ricans on the mainland. It sponsors a variety of programs in education, housing, business, leadership training, and urban affairs.

Aspira clubs around the country foster leadership and cultural identity while providing many young Puerto Ricans with the financial and counseling assistance needed to finish high school and attend college.

and members of Central High School's Club in Newark, N.J., successfully petitioned for a Spanish-speaking guidance counselor.

The widely recognized effectiveness of the Aspira program has helped it to become self-sustaining through grants from hundreds of foundations, corporations, and government agencies. For that reason, and because of changing program priorities, the Ford Foundation's general support for the organization concluded with a final $260,000 grant for 1972 and 1973.

Occasionally, however, the Foundation may partially support a special Aspira project that needs funding to continue its work. Such an instance arose in early 1975. Aspira de Puerto Rico had successfully developed and tested a pilot tutorial program aimed at adolescent dropouts with minimal reading and writing abilities. The program, which trains teachers to use specially designed curriculum materials, gives young people the language skills needed to return to school or to get jobs.

The Commonwealth government had originally agreed to fund a major portion of the first year's budget, but when changing priorities cancelled the government's support, the Ford Foundation granted Aspira of America $50,000. As many as 1,000 Puerto Rican youth in San Juan are expected to receive tutoring, and it is hoped that the published materials will be put into use throughout the island.

Getting Started in College. Motivating Puerto Rican students to attend college is only the first step toward widening their opportunities for higher education. They must be capable of meeting admission requirements or, in cases of open admissions, be able to maintain standards to continue to graduation. For someone born in Puerto Rico whose first language is Spanish these can be formidable hurdles. Even those doing superior academic work often feel isolated and need to develop a sense of identity and confidence. Several Foundation-assisted programs have been addressed to these problems.

In 1968 the City University of New York (CUNY) established with Foundation assistance an experimental bilingual program designed to prepare Puerto Rican high school graduates with little or no knowledge of English for a regular college curriculum. The aim was to develop a facility in English by the end of the two-year program, so that the students could continue their college studies in English. The original program enabled students to earn one full year of transferable college credit at Bronx Community College and encouraged them to transfer to a senior college. Classes of forty-five students each were recruited in 1968 and 1969 by community organizations such as Aspira and Mobilization for Youth, a New York City community organization. Besides taking intensive instruction in English as a second language, the students earned credit for courses taught in Spanish, and as their English proficiency increased, some began taking courses taught in English. They also received stipends and financial, personal, and vocational counseling.

At the end of the two-year period, about 73 per cent of those who completed the program spoke English well enough to move into a full English language curriculum—a high proportion in light of the experimental nature of the program. The dropout rate was discouraging however—18 per cent of the first group did not complete the program, and another 16

per cent who did finish and were recommended for a regular curriculum declined to continue. Evaluations of the program indicate that the high dropout rate may have been caused by the fact that many students were forced to work part-time to support themselves and were living outside the normal family household—alone, or with friends or relatives. The evaluations concluded that future programs of this nature would have to pay greater attention to the personal and economic needs of the students.

In 1970 CUNY assumed funding for the bilingual program and transferred it to Herbert H. Lehman College in the Bronx, which was becoming a nationally recognized center of Puerto Rican study and culture. To date, more than 1,000 students either have successfully completed or are currently enrolled in the program.

Wesleyan University (Connecticut) obtained Foundation funds in 1969 for a series of activities to help improve the educational services for Spanish-speaking college students on its campus and at neighboring universities. An inter-university conference, attended by students, college and graduate school administrators, and representatives from Puerto Rican community organizations, discussed strategies for increasing Puerto Rican admissions to undergraduate colleges and professional schools. The conference resulted in the formation of a Puerto Rican Student Federation and a committee of Latin pre-medical students. Close ties were established among the twelve participating universities, which led to such joint programs as the sharing of personnel to recruit Puerto Rican students.

Universidad Boricua, a private, experimental institution established in 1973 to serve the special needs of adult Puerto Ricans on the United States mainland, received $280,000 from the Foundation to help formulate long-range management and financial plans and integrate educational technology into its instruction. An outgrowth of the Puerto Rican Research and Resources Center (see p. 14), the university is located in Washington, D.C., and operates a learning center in a small loft building in Brooklyn, N.Y., which will serve as a prototype for a network of such centers in Eastern and Midwestern cities with large concentrations of Puerto Ricans.

By 1980 Boricua hopes to provide academic credentials ranging from the high school equivalency through associate of arts and baccalaureate degrees. Bilingual instruction in a bicultural environment is tailored to individual needs by a learning contract worked out by the student and bilingual faculty member. The aim is not only to prepare students for work but also to help them earn academic credentials, thus increasing their chances for employment and greater job mobility.

After Junior College. A two-year stint in a community or junior college is often the only chance Puerto Ricans and other minorities have for higher education. Disproportionately large numbers of such students are attracted to the growing system of two-year colleges because generally they are nonresidential institutions serving local constituencies, charge lower tuition and fees, provide both career-oriented and academic programs, and offer courses at hours convenient for working students. But some 70 per cent of two-year college graduates do not go on to receive a bachelor's degree, many for financial reasons.

To provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans, black Americans, Mexican Americans, and American Indians to continue their education at four-year colleges, the Foundation in 1970 initiated the Upper Division Scholarship Program, and since then has committed more than $6 million to the program. The scholarships were designed to serve these four groups because they were the most seriously underrepresented in higher education. A recent report commissioned by the Foundation has shown that despite recent gains in admissions by blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans, the proportion attending college remains substantially lower than their percentage in the population.*

Administered by the College Entrance Examination Board, the Upper Division program awards approximately 1,000 scholarships each year to minority students around the country who have good academic records, have been accepted by a senior institution, and have substantial financial need. If recipients maintain satisfactory grades, their awards are renewed for the senior year.

Since the program began, some 194 Puerto Rican students have received scholarships, which pay, depending upon need, between 20 and 80 per cent of the total cost of their last two years of college.† The awards make the critical difference to students from families earning an average of $5,000 a year.

The performance of the recipients attests to the success of the program. Most students receive their bachelor's degrees (some *magna cum laude*) and several have been awarded graduate study fellowships. Although more than half of the students worked during the last academic year, about one-fourth were placed on the dean's list. Another measure of the program's success is the recent decision by the General Electric Company to pattern an engineering scholarship program for minorities directly on the Upper Division model.

Puerto Rican Studies. Growing interest in the culture and history of various ethnic groups has given rise to countless ethnic studies programs at colleges and universities around the country. They vary from one professor teaching a course in, for example, the history of black Americans, to entire academic departments offering not only courses but research facilities, special lectures, and cultural programs.

The City University of New York, serving the largest number of Puerto Rican students of any mainland university, has Puerto Rican Studies programs at nearly all its twenty-five branches. To provide them with special services, the Foundation in 1973 granted $485,150 to help set up the Center of Puerto Rican Studies.** CUNY has committeed $1.2 million of its own funds and agreed to continue the center after the five-year term of the grant.

The center has established a library devoted to Puerto Rican subjects, has strengthened existing Puerto Rican Studies programs, and established new ones. It works to document Puerto Rican history and analyze data on

**Minority Enrollment and Representation in Institutions of Higher Education*, by Madelon Delany Stent and Frank Brown, 1974. Available from ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 2020 14th St., N., Arlington, Va. 22201.

†List of scholarship recipients is available on request.

**The grant to CUNY was the sixth and final one in a series for support of graduate programs in ethnic studies. Programs assisted by the Foundation at other universities were for Afro-American, American Indian, Mexican American, and Asian American studies.

Puerto Rican life today. The center disseminates exhibits, handles arrangements for speakers on Puerto Rican culture and arts, and conducts studies on such subjects as language policy and how it affects learning in elementary and secondary schools. It also has done research on prisons and the criminal justice system, which have authority over disproportionately large numbers of Puerto Ricans.

One of the center's major activities during 1974 was a three-day conference on Puerto Rican history, attended by more than 250 scholars, students, and community leaders from as far away as California and Puerto Rico. Background papers on such topics as migration, class structure, economic dependency, and Puerto Rican independence were presented and are now being edited for publication.* The conference, which will be held annually, provided a unique opportunity for the exchange of views and the production of scholarly articles that contribute to the understanding of the Puerto Rican experience.

Wesleyan University used part of a Foundation grant to establish a new faculty position in Puerto Rican literature and culture; a speakers' series that brought to the campus specialists in Puerto Rican culture, politics, and history; and The Latin House, a private dwelling that houses Puerto Rican students and serves as a cultural center. When the Ford Foundation grant expired in 1971 the university incorporated these activities into its regular budget.

Doctoral Fellowships. Because of their poor representation among college and university teachers, Puerto Ricans are eligible for Ford Foundation doctoral fellowships leading to careers in higher education. Blacks, Mexican Americans, and American Indians also participate in the program. Together these four groups, which make up at least 15 per cent of the U.S. population, represent only an estimated 1 per cent of Americans holding Ph.D.s.†

In 1967 the Ford Foundation began two separate programs—one-year Advanced Study Fellowships for faculty members who had completed some graduate work and who wished to study full time for the doctorate, and longer-term Doctoral Fellowships, for students just beginning graduate school.

The two programs were consolidated in 1972.** The one-year awards are of two types: renewable fellowships for course work and oral examination preparation; and nonrenewable doctoral dissertation fellowships. Eligibility is limited to applicants who plan to pursue full-time study toward the doctorate in the arts, sciences, or related professional fields and who intend to pursue a career in higher education.

Since the programs began, 202 Puerto Ricans have received awards totaling more than $2.2 million. The fellowships average $5,000 a year, including full tuition and fees, an allowance for books and supplies, and a monthly

*Background papers available from the Center of Puerto Rican Studies, City University of New York, 500 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036.

†Other ethnic groups—Asian Americans, for example—have also suffered from discrimination and poverty, but they are not underrepresented on college and university faculties. Rather than address the general struggle of all ethnic groups seeking advanced degrees, the Foundation chose to confine its graduate fellowship program to those who were most seriously underrepresented.

**Fellowships for blacks are administered by the National Fellowships Fund in Atlanta under a grant from the Ford Foundation. Those for Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians are administered by Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, and Berkeley, California.

Candido de Leon, recipient of a Ford Foundation graduate fellowship in 1970, became the first Puerto Rican college president in the United States when he was named to head Hostos Community College in New York City.

living stipend.* Funds have been allocated to continue the fellowship competition through 1976, and recipients of those awards will be eligible for renewal grants through 1980.

Educational Policy. Numerous federal and private agencies have become involved in the planning of educational programs aimed at Puerto Ricans, but often their efforts have been hampered by the lack of basic information on the educational needs of Puerto Ricans, and the lack of preparedness of Puerto Ricans for defining the issues and priorities, even when they are offered some participation in agenda-setting.

To provide the framework for more effective policy making, a group of Puerto Rican educators recently established a National Puerto Rican Task Force on Educational Policy. Supported by a $25,000 Ford Foundation grant to the City University of New York, the task force will undertake a review of the educational needs and priorities of Puerto Ricans around the country. It also will engage in national policy analysis on these issues, serve as a clearinghouse for information on Puerto Rican education, and offer technical support to Puerto Rican educators in policy exchanges with governmental and other agencies.

Dovetailing with the work of the task force, Aspira of America is preparing a statistical profile of the educational progress and problems of Puerto Ricans in approximately twelve mainland cities. The Foundation granted $56,175 for the study, which will be widely distributed not only to Puerto Rican individuals and agencies, but also to policy makers at the local, state, and federal levels.

*List of fellowship recipients is available on request.

Preserving History and Culture

In the last few years, Puerto Ricans, like other ethnic groups in the United States, have sought to strengthen cultural identity by establishing Puerto Rican studies programs and special service organizations. There have been increased requests for more information on Puerto Rican history and for help in setting up cultural exhibits, lecture series, and other activities. But the few Puerto Rican agencies that existed in the early 1970s were insufficient to handle the many requests for information, materials, technical assistance, and research on Puerto Rican subjects.

The Puerto Rican Research and Resources Center was organized in Washington, D.C., in 1971 by the Puerto Rican Forum to serve as a clearinghouse for Puerto Rican faculty members; for books, curricula, and arts and crafts, and cultural and musical programs and lectures. Ford Foundation support for the center has totaled $625,000. The program is national in scope, serving civic groups, government agencies, schools, and Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican individuals. Staff and consultants conduct research, disseminate information on contemporary social needs, bring together leaders of the Puerto Rican community to develop priorities, and locate experts on Puerto Rican subjects who can serve as lecturers or professors.

During its first year, the center established a network among Puerto Rican groups in seventy-two cities across the nation and quickly became an active force in promoting social and educational advancement. Some of its activities include:

—publication of *The Puerto Ricans: An Annotated Bibliography,* a 300-page reference tool for Puerto Rican studies programs;

—completion of a study aimed at isolating the factors that lead to the high dropout rate among Puerto Rican youth;

—establishment of an information clearinghouse, a comprehensive data bank and referral service covering all aspects of Puerto Rican life;

—technical assistance to Puerto Rican groups trving to raise funds,

—planning of the Universidad Boricua and establishment of its first branch (see p. 10).

Through such activities as its newsletter, the center is providing Puerto Ricans with information that can assist them in their efforts to reassert cultural identity and break the cycle of barrio poverty. C .her activities planned by the center in the future are increased use of public meetings, films, lectures, and special seminars in universities on issues relevant to Puerto Ricans.

To complement the center's work and further fill the gap of knowledge about Puerto Rican history and culture, a major research study was undertaken in 1972 of the island's official records and documents, which date back to the 15th century. The project, which received Foundation assistance, was under the direction of Maria Josefa Canino, associate professor and chairperson of the Department of Puerto Rican Studies at Livingston College (Rutgers University). Twenty-four students spent an academic year poring through dusty records that had been removed from Puerto Rico by the American government after the Spanish-American War and placed in libraries in the United States. Until a few years ago they had been closed to research and investigation.

The study contains a complete listing and annotation of the documents and reproduces the full texts of the most significant among them.* It is intended to serve as a basis for the development of courses on Puerto Rican history and culture offered by colleges, secondary and elementary schools, and community organizations.

Attacking Poverty

The most obvious and direct way to raise income among Puerto Rican families is to provide employment and business opportunities, traditionally scarce in ghetto communities. Although language difficulties, educational deficiencies, racial discrimination, and lack of familiarity with current American business practices have severely handicapped Puerto Rican businessmen and entrepreneurs, their most serious drawback has been the inability to obtain financing. Banks are reluctant to lend because they feel there is a high risk of loan default. Even the Small Business Administration, the federal loan agency established to service small independent businessmen, cannot adequately satisfy the needs of Puerto Rican businesses.

In response to the need for a new approach to making capital available, the Puerto Rican Forum in 1968 began an experimental loan guarantee program. The Ford Foundation contributed $50,000 to cover administrative costs and $200,000 deposited at two par-

**Research Project of Unknown Documents in the History and Culture of Puerto Rico,* edited by Carlos Piñeiro, available from Livingston College, Department of Puerto Rican Studies, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

ti·ipating New York City banks, Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company and Banco Popular de Puerto Rico. In cooperation with the forum, the banks determined whether or not the loans requested by businessmen were good investments and calculated the risks of repayment. Under the program, loans were made to fourteen new or existing businesses. (If a portion of a loan was not repaid to the bank, that amount was deducted from the Ford Foundation funds on deposit.) The forum also provided technical assistance so that the borrowers could improve their operations and avoid repeating past mistakes.

In 1971 the forum also sponsored a Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Company (MESBIC), part of a national federal program to make investment capital and long-term loans available to minority businesses. A $250,000 Foundation grant helped the MESBIC get underway, but internal difficulties hindered its effectiveness, and the forum returned the license to the federal government in 1974.

Although many Puerto Rican programs have had a positive impact, the community has lacked an organization to analyze public policy, to consider the interdependent effects of education, health, economic development, and housing on the needs of Puerto Ricans, and to provide an accurate profile of the Puerto Rican community. Thus far there has been little coordination among the various groups addressing specific concerns (health or education, for example), and attempts to improve conditions often have been on an *ad hoc* basis, organized to meet a specific crisis.

The Puerto Rican Institute for Social Research was recently formed to begin to fill this vacuum. With a professional staff of eight, the institute plans to document the needs and problems of the community, to disseminate current data and information regarding Puerto Ricans, to provide technical assistance to Puerto Rican groups and institutions as requested, and to assist public and voluntary agencies that deliver social services to Puerto Ricans.

Initially supported by grants from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Carnegie Corporation, and the Ford Foundation, the institute is headed by Martha Valle, a founding member of both Aspira of America and the Puerto Rican Forum.

Child Care. An important dimension of the poverty of many Puerto Rican families is their need for assistance with child care. For some families the father's often meager income must be supplemented with the mother's earnings, and in order to work she must rely on others to care for her children. And in households headed by women, the mother must choose between turning to public or private agencies for child care while she works, or depending upon welfare assistance while she stays home with the children.

To better understand the child-care needs of Puerto Rican families and how they are met by service organizations, Marta Valle undertook a study of such services in New York City. Ms. Valle, former commissioner of the New York City Youth Services Agency and active in Puerto Rican community affairs for many years, received Foundation assistance for her research.

The survey showed that the vast majority of the Puerto Rican families interviewed were unaware of or unaided by publicly supported social service agencies. A report of the study,

The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, picutred in a street performance of Payment as Pledged, *by Alfredo Dias Gomes, is one of many cultural organizations that receives exposure to the Puerto Rican community through the work of the Puerto Rican Research and Resources Center.*

"What Holds Sami Back?"* also exposed the need for additional day-care facilities in the Puerto Rican community and called for a new organization to provide research, program analysis, and assistance in setting up and operating effective facilities. Such an organization has now been formed, the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs. It is a private advocacy group dealing with foster care and other children's services. The report has also helped the Puerto Rican Family Institute to develop family and child-related services.

Protecting Legal Rights

For Puerto Ricans living on the mainland, lack of legal protection and violation of their civil rights are the results of discrimination and the more subtle biases against people whose primary language is not English. Children have been classified as mentally and educationally retarded simply because they could not speak English, workers have been consigned to menial jobs because they were not accepted for training or union membership, and accused offenders have been denied bail and imprisoned without adequate legal counsel because there were no interpreters in the courts.

To help Puerto Ricans secure their due legal rights the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, modeled after the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, was established in 1972. The fund's litigation, primarily class action civil rights suits, covers such areas as bilingual education, public and private employment, migrant worker conditions, voter rights, and government benefits. The fund also works to increase the number of Puerto Rican lawyers and disseminates information to make the community aware of its legal rights and obligations.

The fund is supported by a wide range of corporations and foundations, including Exxon Corporation, American Telephone and Telegraph, Bankers Trust, Carnegie Corporation, and the Ford Foundation. It already has had considerable impact with its litigation, education, and research activities.

In one of its most important cases, the fund charged that New York City's Board of Education failed to provide adequate educational services to Puerto Rican public school students. In August 1974 a consent agreement was signed by the parties to the case, *Aspira of New York* v. *Board of Education of the City of New York*. The agreement required that students receive intensive English instruction, and that other subjects be taught in Spanish. It also mandated the reinforcement of the students' Spanish language skills and the active recruitment of bilingual teachers.

Fund lawyers are overseeing the implementation of the agreement and thus far have negotiated with the board on questions of language testing devices to be used and the hiring of new teachers. In a precedent-setting ruling, the court ordered that attorney's fees be granted to the fund for its work on this case.

Another suit concerns a group of clothing workers in New Jersey who in 1974 had been trying to end unfair treatment of Puerto Rican union members. They were threatened and harassed for their activities and came to the legal defense fund for help. In *Miranda* v.

*Available at $1.75 from Valle Consultants, 42-12 196 St., Flushing, N.Y. 11358.

The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund is one of several civil rights legal defense organizations that have been instrumental in setting important legal precedents. The fund seeks to eliminate discrimination against Puerto Ricans in employment, government benefits, education, and the administration of justice.

Local 208, the fund charged that Puerto Rican workers were being paid less than non-Puerto Ricans for the same work and were denied access to promotions and higher paying jobs. It also alleged that the union refused adequate hearings for grievances and failed to notify Puerto Ricans of union elections. Thus far the suit has caused the New Jersey Department of Labor to void a recent union election of which many Puerto Ricans had not been informed and forced the union to hold a new election, which included a slate of Puerto Rican candidates.

In the area of voter rights, the fund achieved a significant victory in 1973 in *Torres* v. *Sachs*, which required bilingual ballots and voting instructions and interpreters at polling places in New York districts with high concentrations of Puerto Rican voters. Similar suits were filed and won in Philadelphia and New Jersey. Connecticut took note of these decisions by making bilingual election officials available where needed.

The fund also works to ensure equal treatment of Puerto Ricans by government agencies. *Sanchez* v. *Norton* (1973) protested the unavailability of Spanish-language counseling and other supportive services in the Connecticut Welfare Department, which serves more than 10,000 Puerto Rican clients. The suit also charged that the practice of sending written notices to clients only in English caused confusion among many Puerto Ricans and frequently resulted in their being denied welfare funds. As a result of the suit, virtually all of the department's notices are now bilingual, and the number of Spanish-speaking personnel has increased considerably.

When the fund started its work in 1972, there were only about ninety-five Puerto Rican law students in the entire country, and not many more lawyers. The fund's education program is working to remedy this situation.

In 1974 staff members met with hundreds of undergraduates on college campuses to inform them of the different career possibilities within the field of law, to emphasize the urgent need for Puerto Rican lawyers, and to let them know that the fund would help them through the difficult law school application process. Hundreds of others received extensive counseling in the fund's offices or information by mail. Largely as a result of these efforts, more than 200 Puerto Rican students entered law school in the fall of 1974.

Close contact is also maintained with law schools to ensure that Puerto Rican students are given an equal chance for admission and financial aid. To help students prepare for the difficult law school admission test, the fund sponsors eight-week training courses, and it also has established a small scholarship fund to supplement their financial resources.

The fund also conducts a legal intern program to give Puerto Rican law students firsthand experience with and training in civil rights law. Five or six law students work full-time for a summer at the fund's office, and during the academic year several interns are employed part-time.

Related Activities

In addition to its direct assistance to Puerto Rican organizations and individuals, the Foundation also supports programs aimed at benefiting minority groups generally in which Puerto Ricans have shared. For example:

—The National Urban Fellows program, originally administered by the League of Cities/Conference of Mayors, has since 1969 offered on-the-job training in urban administration to minority men and women. The fellows, who frequently lack the credentials for top administrative positions, work closely with urban executives for ten months, sharing in the decision-making process and gaining experience in the operation of public and quasi-public agencies. To date eighteen Puerto Ricans have participated in the program and gone on to positions in urban management.

—The Michele Clark Fellowship Program for Minority Journalists at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism has trained and placed minority men and women as reporters, editors, and managers in broadcast and print media. The intense, eleven-week summer program, though highly acclaimed, was discontinued after seven years because of changing policies and priorities at cooperating news agencies, Columbia University, and the Ford Foundation. Thirty-three participants have been Spanish-surnamed.

—Community News Service is a nonprofit, minority controlled and staffed press service that distributes a daily calendar of newsworthy events of interest to New York City's minority communities. Its paying subscribers are newspapers, radio and television news departments, city agencies, and businesses. Created in 1971 and supported since then by the Ford Foundation, CNS has helped to encourage fuller coverage of minority affairs by the media.

—In the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn, New York—a mixed ethnic neighborhood of Puerto Rican, Scandinavian, Irish, and Italian residents—a unique coalition has evolved to reverse neighborhood decline. Community residents and staff members of the Lutheran Medical Center have worked for several years to plan a comprehensive program for commercial, industrial, housing, and recreational development. Supported by grants from businesses and foundations (including $150,000 from the Ford Foundation), the medical center and Sunset Park Redevelopment Committee operate a loan fund that enables it to purchase, rehabilitate, and sell homes to low-income families, who also receive homeownership counseling.

—Upper Park Avenue in New York City runs through an area in East Harlem whose population is composed primarily of blacks and Puerto Ricans. In 1965 a group of women in the area joined forces to correct some of the poverty-associated problems of their neighborhood. The result was the formation of the Upper Park Avenue Community Association (UPACA), which is working to redevelop nine square blocks and to provide related tenant services, housing management, and maintenance training programs. Since 1971 Foundation assistance to UPACA has totaled $470,000.

Appendix

Ford Foundation Grants to Puerto Rican Organizations

Aspira of America (1969, '72): Counseling and guidance program to encourage Puerto Rican students to complete high school and attend college;	$1,010,000
—(1975): Tutorial program to help adolescent dropouts return to school or get jobs;	50,000
—(1975): Statistical study of the educational progress and problems of young Puerto Ricans.	56,175
Bilingual education (1975): Foundation-managed project to provide technical assistance to the Puerto Rican community concerning bilingual education.	150,000
Universidad Boricua (1975): Partial support for planning and development and integration of education d technology.	280,000
Catholic University of Puerto Rico (1965): In-service training centers for science, mathematics, and social studies teachers.	78,000
City University of New York (1969): Experimental bilingual program to help Puerto Rican college students prepare for an English curriculum;	224,000
—(1972, '73, '74): Training program for bilingual, bicultural counselors;	453,000
—(1973): Establishment of the Center of Puerto Rican Studies;	485,150
—(1975): Establishment of a National Puerto Rican Task Force on Educational Policy.	25,000
College Entrance Examination Board (1971, '72, '73, '74): Upper Division Scholarship Program to enable minority Junior college graduates to attend senior institutions.	370,000*
Graduate Fellowship Program (1970, '71, '72, '73, '74): Awards to Puerto Rican scholars working toward the doctorate.	2,288,455*
Puerto Rico Department of Education (1963): Joint program with the University of Puerto Rico to reorganize the secondary school curriculum and teaching methods;	618,658
—(1965): Establishment of teacher training centers to improve course offerings;	622,076
—(1967): Planning grant to help prepare a $3.5 million federal teacher training program.	20,000
Puerto Rican Forum (1968): Establishment of loan guaranty fund program;	250,000

*Amounts include only scholarship funds for Puerto Rican students.

—(1971): Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Company (MESBIC).	250,000
Puerto Rican Institute for Social Research (1975): Support for the institute's research, information, and technical assistance efforts.	50,000
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Educational Fund (1973, '74): Support for the fund's litigation, education, and research activities.	210,000
Puerto Rican Research and Resources Center (1971, '72, '73, '74): Support for the center's research and education activities (originally funded through the Puerto Rican Forum).	625,000
State University of New York (1967, '68): Support for the Instructional Administrators Program at Fordham University.	529,050
Upper Division Scholarship Program (1970): Experimental Foundation-managed project (see College Entrance Examination Board).	300,000
Wesleyan University (Connecticut) (1969): Inter-university educational services for Puerto Rican students.	12,513
Total	$8,957,077

Photographs: 2, P. Saitta/Ford Foundation; 8, ASPIRA, Inc. de Puerto Rico; 13, Chester Higgins/Ford Foundation; 17, Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre Company, Inc.; 19, Todd Weinstein/Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Text by Joyce Verhalen Pandolfi.

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